

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 13-17 without prejudice, amend the claims as follows, and add new claims 32-36 as shown below:

1. (Currently Amended) A process for preparing rigid urethane-modified polyisocyanurate foam comprising the step of reacting an organic polyisocyanate with a polyfunctional isocyanate-reactive component comprising at least 30 wt % of polyester polyols in the presence of a blowing agent selected from the group consisting of a hydrocarbon free of halogen atoms or a mixture of water and a hydrocarbon free of halogen atoms, a urethane catalyst, and a metal salt trimerisation catalyst characterized in that the process is carried out in the presence of a carboxylic acid ~~and wherein the blowing agent is selected from the group consisting essentially of: (a) water, (b) a hydrocarbon, or (c) a mixture of water and hydrocarbon~~, wherein the urethane catalyst is used in an amount ranging from 0.1 to 3.5 % by weight based on the isocyanate-reactive component and the metal salt trimerisation catalyst is used in an amount ranging from 0.4 to 4.5 % by weight based on the isocyanate-reactive component.

2. (Original) The process according to claim 1 wherein the carboxylic acid has a molecular weight below 250.

3. (Original) The process according to claim 1 wherein the carboxylic acid has a pKa value in water of between 1 and 5.5.

4. (Original) The process according to claim 2 wherein the carboxylic acid has a pKa value in water of between 1 and 5.5.

5. (Currently Amended) The process according to claim 1 wherein the carboxylic acid is functionalised with at least one ~~additional~~ -OH, -COOH, -SH, -NH₂, -NHR, -NO₂ or halogen functional group, wherein R is an alkyl, cycloalkyl or aryl group.

6. (Currently Amended) The process according to claim 2 wherein the carboxylic acid is functionalised with at least one ~~additional -OH, -COOH,~~ SH, NH₂, NHR, NO₂ or halogen functional group, wherein R is an alkyl, cycloalkyl or aryl group.

7. (Currently Amended) The process according to claim 3 wherein the carboxylic acid is functionalised with at least one ~~additional -OH, -COOH,~~ SH, NH₂, NHR, NO₂ or halogen functional group, wherein R is an alkyl, cycloalkyl or aryl group.

8. (Currently Amended) The process according to claim 4 wherein the carboxylic acid is functionalised with at least one ~~additional -OH, -COOH,~~ SH, NH₂, NHR, NO₂ or halogen functional group, wherein R is an alkyl, cycloalkyl or aryl group.

9. (Original) The process according to claim 5 wherein the carboxylic acid is functionalised in α or β position with respect to the carboxyl group.

10. (Original) The process according to claim 6 wherein the carboxylic acid is functionalised in α or β position with respect to the carboxyl group.

11. (Currently Amended) The process according to claim 9 wherein said functionalised carboxylic acid corresponds to the general formula $X_n - R' - COOH$ wherein X is ~~OH, -COOH,~~ SH, NH₂, NHR, NO₂ or halogen, R' is an at least divalent hydrocarbon moiety, n is an integer having a value of at least 1 and allows for mono and polyfunctional substitution on the hydrocarbon moiety.

12. (Currently Amended) The process according to claim 10 wherein said functionalised carboxylic acid corresponds to the general formula $X_n - R' - COOH$ wherein X is ~~OH, -COOH,~~ SH, NH₂, NHR, NO₂ or halogen, R' is an at least divalent

hydrocarbon moiety, n is an integer having a value of at least 1 and allows for mono and polyfunctional substitution on the hydrocarbon moiety.

13. (Cancelled)

14. (Cancelled)

15. (Cancelled)

16. (Cancelled).

17. (Cancelled).

18. (Original) The process according to claim 1 wherein said carboxylic acid is used in an amount ranging from 0.05 to 5 % by weight based on the isocyanate-reactive component.

19. (Original) The process according to claim 2 wherein said carboxylic acid is used in an amount ranging from 0.05 to 5 % by weight based on the isocyanate-reactive component.

20. (Cancelled)

21. (Cancelled)

22. (Previously Presented) The process according to claim 1 wherein the metal salt trimerisation catalyst is an alkali metal salt of an organic carboxylic acid.

23. (Previously Presented) The process according to claim 2 wherein the metal salt trimerisation catalyst is an alkali metal salt of an organic carboxylic acid.

24. (Original) The process according to claim 23 wherein the metal salt trimerisation catalyst is potassium acetate or potassium 2-ethylhexanoate.

25. (Cancelled)

26. (Original) The process according to claim 1 wherein the reaction is carried out at an isocyanate index of 150 to 450 %.

27. (Cancelled)

28. (Currently Amended) A rigid urethane-modified polyisocyanurate foam obtained by reacting an organic polyisocyanate with a polyfunctional isocyanate-reactive component comprising at least 30 wt % of polyester polyols in the presence of a blowing agent selected from the group consisting of a hydrocarbon free of halogen atoms or a mixture of water and a hydrocarbon free of halogen atoms, a urethane catalyst, and a metal salt trimerisation catalyst characterized in that the process is carried out in the presence of a carboxylic acid ~~and wherein the blowing agent is selected from the group consisting essentially of: (a) water, (b) a hydrocarbon, or (c) a mixture of water and hydrocarbon~~, wherein the urethane catalyst is used in an amount ranging from 0.1 to 3.5 % by weight based on the isocyanate-reactive component and the metal salt trimerisation catalyst is used in an amount ranging from 0.4 to 4.5 % by weight based on the isocyanate-reactive component.

29. (Cancelled)

30. (Currently Amended) A process for preparing rigid urethane-modified polyisocyanurate foam comprising the step of reacting an organic polyisocyanate with a polyfunctional isocyanate-reactive component comprising at least 30 wt % of polyester polyols in the presence of a blowing agent ~~consisting of water~~, and a metal salt trimerisation catalyst characterized in that the process is carried out in the presence of a functionalised carboxylic acid having at least one SH, NH₂, NHR, NO₂ or halogen functional group, wherein R is an alkyl, cycloalkyl or aryl group and the metal salt trimerisation catalyst is used in an amount ranging from 0.5 to 5 % by weight based on the isocyanate-reactive component.

31. (Previously Presented) The process according to claim 30 wherein the water is present is an amount less than 1 % by weight based on the isocyanate-reactive component.

Please add new claims 32-36 as follows:

32. (New) The process according to claim 1, wherein the hydrocarbon free of halogen atoms comprises lower aliphatic of cyclic, linear or branched hydrocarbons.

33. (New) The process according to claim 32, wherein the hydrocarbon free of halogen atoms are selected from the group of n-butane, iso-butane, 2,3-dimethylbutane, cyclobutane, n-pentane, iso-pentane, technical grade pentane mixtures, cyclopentane, methylcyclopentane, neopentane, n-hexane, iso-hexane, n-heptane, iso-heptane, cyclohexane, methylcyclohexane, 1-pentene, 2-methylbutene, 3-methylbutene, 1-hexene, and mixtures thereof.

34. (New) The process according to claim 28, wherein the carboxylic acid is functionalised with at least one SH, NH₂, NHR, NO₂ or halogen functional group, wherein R is an alkyl, cycloalkyl or aryl group.

35. (New) The process according to claim 34 wherein the carboxylic acid is functionalised in α or β position with respect to the carboxyl group.

36. (New) The process according to claim 34 wherein the carboxylic acid corresponds to the general formula $X_n - R' - COOH$ wherein X is SH, NH_2 , NHR, NO_2 or halogen, R' is an at least divalent hydrocarbon moiety, n is an integer having a value of at least 1 and allows for mono and polyfunctional substitution on the hydrocarbon moiety.